

Doherty-Gibson Playground Improvements
Community Meeting #1
Meeting Notes

Date: 1/16/2020

Location: VietAID Community Center

Presenters: Annie Blair (AB), Boston Parks & Recreation Department
Cheri Ruane (CR), Weston & Sampson

Presentation:

- AB opened the meeting with introductions, a project overview, City of Boston priorities and BPRD goals, and the anticipated schedule.
- CR reviewed the existing site conditions, opportunities and constraints, and elements of play, and showed photos of other playgrounds and water play as examples to spur conversation. She also showed the playground within the larger context of the overall park, and then focused on the project area which includes the playground, the entry plaza, and the open lawn area and slope to the south of the existing playground.

After this brief presentation and introduction to the project, the design team opened the floor to the public for feedback, thoughts and questions.

General Comments:

- Playground and plaza have no sense of place.
- The lower field used to be flooded in the winter for skating and some would like to see if skating could be accommodated now in the plaza area.
- The hill is used for sledding in the winter.
- Benches have encouraged bad behavior in the playground and plaza, and at the bleachers.
 - The field house has been designated a historically significant building and needs upgrading, which will be part of a separate project from the playground improvements. Exterior improvements will include a handicap ramp to the entrance, which should be appropriate to the architectural style.
- Lighting in the plaza is needed
 - Standards vs. special lighting

- All Dorchester Sports and Leadership (ADSL) has park users looking for projects for days of service and would like to encourage community participation—landscape maintenance?
- Noisy in the park because of sound coming off Dorchester Avenue
- Only 1 trash receptacle currently; more are needed. There is lots of trash in play area. If trash receptacles have access panels on the sides of the barrels, these panels should be kept locked.
- It would be good to extend the footprint of the playground to the south, and activate the entire area as much as possible to encourage positive uses.
- Concerns about unhoused population using the playground in negative ways.
- It is important to the police to keep views into the park, especially the grandstand, from Gibson Street.
- Maintenance truck access into the park should be accommodated with as little driving over lawn areas as possible.
- Discussion around removing/relocating southern entrance on Dorchester Avenue—currently used for people hanging out/drinking. Change in grade also an issue for accessibility. Would like to activate area and make accessible to drive out negative behaviors.

Considerations for Renovation:

- Adult exercise equipment on a loop path
- Cover for snow/rain/shade
- Performance space/school use
- Outdoor classroom/office
- Flexible bollards to control vehicle access?
- Wrought iron arch over the top of the gates/piers
- Rubberized safety surfacing instead of wood fiber mulch
- Maps and kiosks/wayfinding
- Water feature/splash pad, maybe with water from above
- Curling/skating in winter
- Steps into the slope and side of slope for play and slides
- Shade
- Drinking fountain/bottle filler/dog bowl
- Kemp playground in Cambridge as precedent
- Shade pavilion in lawn
- Climbing wall similar to the one at Andrews Playground in Milton, MA
- Kiosks/community board for use by ADLS.
 - More than 1?
- Security cameras?
- More decorative fencing along streetscape while maintaining safety and views into park
- Along fence line, visibility and access
- Movie night capability?
- Terraced seating

- Benches with center arm rest
- Space to run
- Utilize fences along Bourneside for decorative feature
- Natural elements to explore
- Bicycle rodeos
- Concern about balls from men's baseball coming into playground